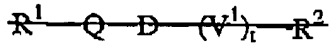
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

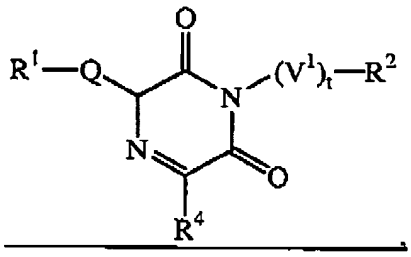
Listing of claims:

1 (currently amended). ~~A compound of Formula I~~



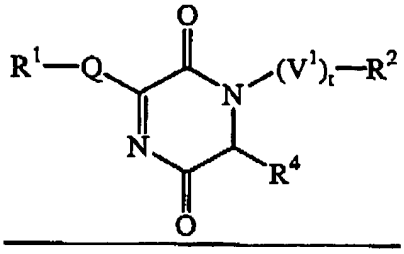
I

A compound of Formula II or IV



II

or



IV

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein:

R^1 and R^2 independently are selected from:

C_1-C_6 alkyl;

Substituted C_1-C_6 alkyl;

C_2-C_6 alkenyl;

Substituted C_2-C_6 alkenyl;

C_2-C_6 alkynyl;

Substituted C_2-C_6 alkynyl;

C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

Substituted C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl;

Substituted 3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl;

3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted 3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Naphthyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted naphthyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted 5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Phenyl;

Substituted phenyl;

Naphthyl;

Substituted naphthyl;

5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl;

Substituted 5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl;

R^3O-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted R^3O-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Phenyl-O-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Substituted phenyl-O-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Phenyl-S-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Substituted phenyl-S-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Phenyl-S(O)-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Substituted phenyl-S(O)-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

Phenyl-$S(O)_2$-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl); and

Substituted phenyl-$S(O)_2$-(C_1-C_8 alkylenyl);

wherein R^1 and R^2 are not both selected from:

C_1-C_6 alkyl;

C_2-C_6 alkenyl;

C_2-C_6 alkynyl; and

C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

Each R^3 independently is selected from:

H;

C_1-C_6 alkyl;

Substituted C_1-C_6 alkyl;

C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

Substituted C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

Phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Naphthyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted naphthyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Substituted 5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

Phenyl;

Substituted phenyl;

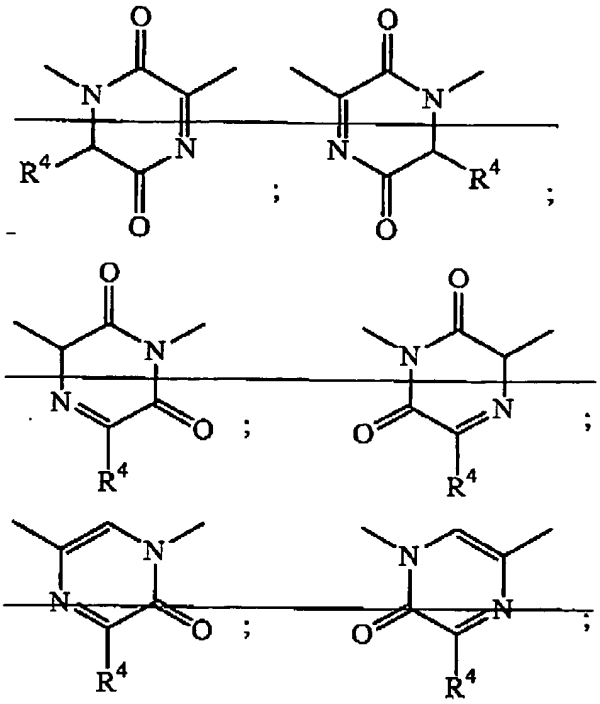
Naphthyl;

Substituted naphthyl;

5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl;

Substituted 5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl;

~~D is a heteromonocyclic diradical;~~



Each R^4 independently is selected from:

H;

F;

CH_3;

CF_3;

C(O)H;

CN;

HO;

CH_3O;

$C(F)H_2O$;

$C(H)F_2O$; and

CF_3O;

t is an integer of 0 or 1;

~~V^1 is selected from:~~

~~a 5-membered heteroarylenyl;~~

~~$CH_2C{=}C$;~~

~~$CF_2C{\equiv}C$;~~

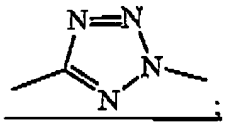
~~C(O)O;~~

~~C(S)O;~~

~~C(O)N(R^5); and~~

~~C(S)N(R^5);~~

V^1 is



;

~~Q, when bonded to a nitrogen atom in group D, is selected from:~~

~~OC(O);~~

~~CH(R^6)C(O);~~

~~OC(NR^6);~~

~~CH(R^6)C(NR^6);~~

~~N(R^6)C(O);~~

~~N(R^6)C(S);~~

~~N(R^6)C(NR^6);~~

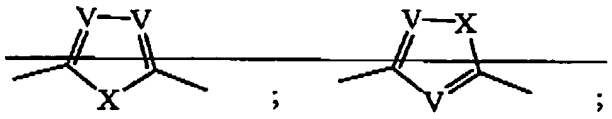
~~SC(O);~~

~~CH(R^6)C(S);~~

~~SC(NR^6);~~

~~C=CCH_2;~~

~~C=CCF_2;~~



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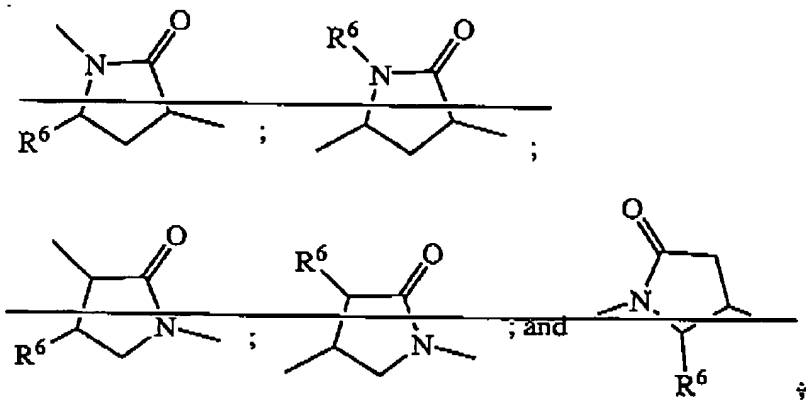


~~Q, when bonded to a carbon atom in group D, is as defined above and may further be selected from:~~

~~OCH_2;~~

~~$N(R^6)CH_2$;~~

~~trans-(H)C=C(H);~~

~~cis-(H)C=C(H);~~

~~C≡C;~~

~~$CH_2C{\equiv}C$; and~~

~~$CF_2C{\equiv}C$;~~

~~Each X independently is O, S, N(H), or N(C_1-C_6-alkyl);~~

~~Each V independently is C(H) or N;~~

~~Each R^5 independently is H or C_1-C_6-alkyl;~~

Q is $N(R^6)C(O)$ or C≡C;

R^6 is H, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl; 3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl;

phenyl; benzyl; or 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl;

Each "substituted" group contains from 1 to 4 substituents, each independently on a carbon or nitrogen atom, independently selected from:

C_1-C_6 alkyl;

C_2-C_6 alkenyl;

C_2-C_6 alkynyl;

C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl;

C_3-C_6 cycloalkylmethyl;

Phenyl;

Phenylmethyl;

3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkyl;

3- to 6-membered heterocycloalkylmethyl;

cyano;

CF_3;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-OC(O);

$HOCH_2$;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-OCH_2;

H_2NCH_2;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-$N(H)CH_2$;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-NCH_2;

$N(H)_2C(O)$;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-N(H)C(O);

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-NC(O);

$N(H)_2C(O)N(H)$;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-N(H)C(O)N(H);

$N(H)_2C(O)N(C_1$-C_6 alkyl);

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-N(H)C(O)N(C_1-C_6 alkyl);

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-NC(O)N(H);

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-NC(O)N(C_1-C_6 alkyl);

$N(H)_2C(O)O$;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-N(H)C(O)O;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-NC(O)O;

HO;

(C_1-C_6 alkyl)-O;

CF_3O;

$CF_2(H)O$;

$CF(H)_2O$;

H_2N;

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-N(H);

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)$_2$-N;

O_2N;

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-S;

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-S(O);

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-$S(O)_2$;

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)$_2$-$NS(O)_2$;

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-$S(O)_2$-N(H)-C(O)-$(C_1\text{-}C_8$ alkylenyl)$_m$; and

$(C_1\text{-}C_6$ alkyl)-C(O)-N(H)-$S(O)_2$-$(C_1\text{-}C_8$ alkylenyl)$_m$;

wherein each substituent on a carbon atom may further be independently selected from:

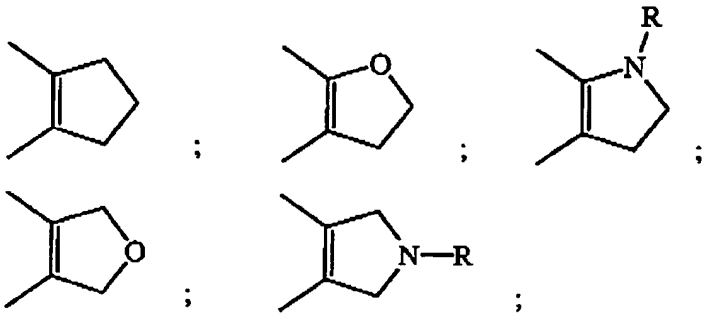
Halo;

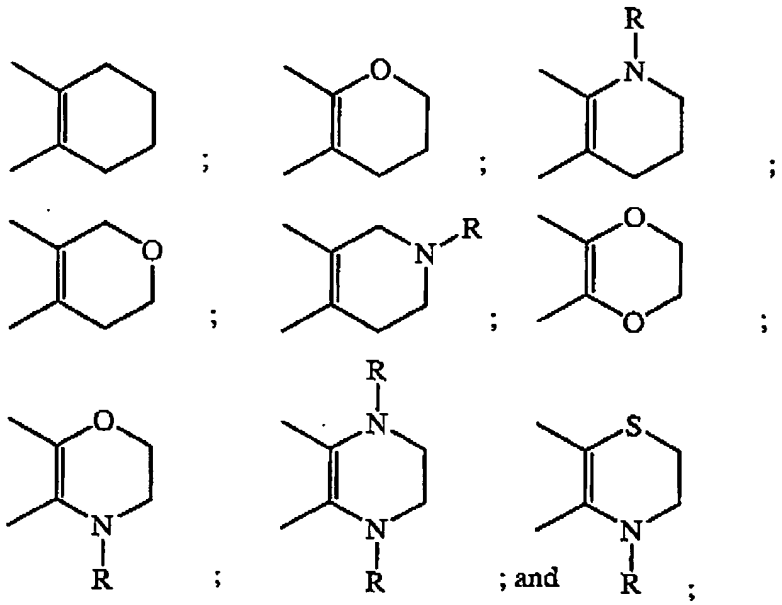
HO_2C; and

OCH_2O, wherein each O is bonded to adjacent carbon atoms to form a 5-membered ring;

wherein 2 substituents may be taken together with a carbon atom to which they are both bonded to form the group C=O;

wherein two adjacent, substantially sp^2 carbon atoms may be taken together with a diradical substituent to form a cyclic diradical selected from:





Each m independently is an integer of 0 or 1;

R is H or C_1-C_6 alkyl;

~~wherein each 5-membered heteroarylenyl independently is a 5-membered ring containing carbon atoms and from 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from 1 O, 1 S, 1 NH, 1 N(C_1-C_6-alkyl), and 4 N, wherein the O and S atoms are not both present, and wherein the heteroarylenyl may optionally be unsubstituted or substituted with 1 substituent selected from fluoro, methyl, hydroxy, trifluoromethyl, cyano, and acetyl;~~

wherein each heterocycloalkyl is a ring that contains carbon atoms and 1 or 2 heteroatoms independently selected from 2 O, 1 S, 1 S(O), 1 $S(O)_2$, 1 N, 2 N(H), and 2 N(C_1-C_6 alkyl), and wherein when two O atoms or one O atom and one S atom are present, the two O atoms or one O atom and one S atom are not bonded to each other, and wherein the ring is saturated or optionally contains one carbon-carbon or carbon-nitrogen double bond;

wherein each 5-membered heteroaryl contains carbon atoms and from 1 to 4 heteroatoms independently selected from 1 O, 1 S, 1 N(H), 1 N(C_1-C_6 alkyl), and 4 N, and each 6-membered heteroaryl contains carbon atoms

and 1 or 2 heteroatoms independently selected from N, N(H), and N(C_1-C_6 alkyl), and 5- and 6-membered heteroaryl are monocyclic rings; and 9- and 10-membered heteroaryl are 6,5-fused and 6,6-fused bicyclic rings, respectively, wherein at least 1 of the 2 fused rings of a bicyclic ring is aromatic, and wherein when the O and S atoms both are present, the O and S atoms are not bonded to each other;

wherein with any (C_1-C_6 alkyl)$_2$-N group, the C_1-C_6 alkyl groups may be optionally taken together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached to form a 5- or 6-membered heterocycloalkyl; and

wherein each group and each substituent recited above is independently selected.

2-5 (canceled).

6 (currently amended). The compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein at least one of R^1 and R^2 is independently selected from:

Phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl); and

Substituted phenyl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

wherein each group and each substituent is independently selected.

7 (currently amended). The compound according to according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein at least one of R^1 and R^2 is independently selected from:

5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl); and

Substituted 5-, 6-, 9-, and 10-membered heteroaryl-(C_1-C_6 alkylenyl);

wherein each heteroaryl contains carbon atoms and from 1 to 4 heteroatoms independently selected from 1 O, 1 S, 1 N(H), 1 N(C_1-C_6 alkyl), and 4 N, and 5- and 6-membered heteroaryl are monocyclic rings and 9- and 10-membered heteroaryl are 6,5-fused and 6,6-fused bicyclic rings, respectively, wherein at least 1 of the 2 fused rings of a bicyclic ring is

aromatic, and wherein when the O and S atoms both are present, the O and S atoms are not bonded to each other; and

wherein each group and each substituent is independently selected.

8 (canceled).

9 (currently amended). The compound ~~of Formula II according to Claim 8,~~ selected from:

4-[5-(3-Benzylcarbamoyl-2,6-dioxo-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl)-tetrazol-2-yl]-benzoic acid;

4-(5-{2,6-Dioxo-3-[(pyridin-4-ylmethyl)-carbamoyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl}-tetrazol-2-yl)-benzoic acid;

4-[3-(3-Benzylcarbamoyl-2,6-dioxo-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl)-prop-2-ynyl]-benzoic acid;

4-(3-{2,6-Dioxo-3-[(pyridin-4-ylmethyl)-carbamoyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl}-prop-2-ynyl)-benzoic acid;

4-{2-[2,6-Dioxo-3-(3-phenyl-prop-1-ynyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-oxazol-5-yl}-benzoic acid;

4-{2-[3-(3-Imidazol-1-yl-prop-1-ynyl)-2,6-dioxo-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-oxazol-4-yl}-benzoic acid;

4-{3-[2,6-Dioxo-3-(3-phenyl-prop-1-ynyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-prop-2-ynyl}-benzoic acid;

4-{3-[3-(3-Imidazol-1-yl-prop-1-ynyl)-2,6-dioxo-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-prop-2-ynyl}-benzoic acid;

4-({[2,6-Dioxo-3-(5-phenyl-oxazol-2-yl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazine-1-carbonyl]-amino}-methyl)-benzoic acid;

4-{3-[2,6-Dioxo-3-(5-phenyl-oxazol-2-yl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-prop-2-ynyl}-benzoic acid;

4-{5-[2,6-Dioxo-3-(4-phenyl-oxazol-2-yl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-tetrazol-2-yl}-benzoic acid; and

4-{3-[2,6-Dioxo-3-(4-phenyl-oxazol-2-yl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-pyrazin-1-yl]-prop-2-ynyl}-benzoic acid;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10 (canceled).

11 (original). A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a compound according to Claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, admixed with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, excipient, or diluent.

12 (canceled).

13 (currently amended). A method for treating osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, comprising administering to a patient suffering from osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis a nontoxic effective amount of a compound according to ~~Claim 1~~ claim 9, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

14 (canceled).